

SHAPING THE PEACE: WORLD WAR I ENDS

Post World
War I Europe
and the Treaty
of Versailles





POINT #1: NO SECRET TREATIES

Had the Austro-Hungarian Empire known that tiny Serbia had a secret defensive treaty with Russia, a major European Power, they may not have been so harsh in their demands of Serbia after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. When Austria-Hungary committed itself to war against Serbia, they started a process much larger than they realized – and “The Great War” resulted.





CORBIS

POINT #2: FREEDOM OF THE SEAS!

Particularly after the sinking of the *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland in 1915, the United States was devoted to the principle of Freedom of the Seas. Free trade and freedom of the seas were two closely related points in most American minds.



POINT #3: FREE TRADE AMONG NATIONS.



Many Americans argued the obstacles to free trade – like taxes, tariffs, and import duties – prevented business relationships from being established between nations. They argued that nations who would not trade together could not be close allies, and that war may break out as a result. The idea of free trade relationships has only recently taken hold. And some free trade agreements, like NAFTA, remain controversial.

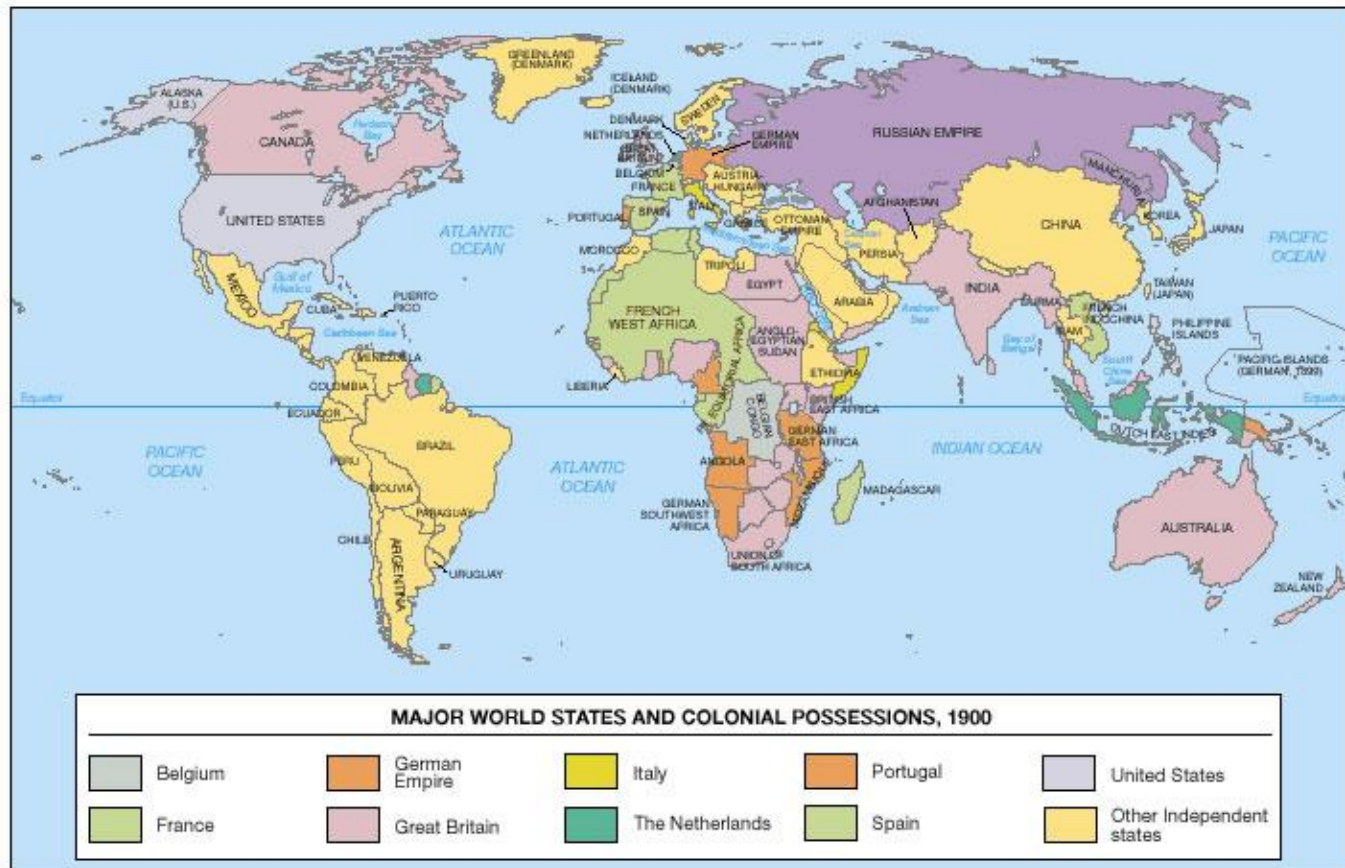





POINT #4: MILITARY DISARMAMENT

After World War I, it was hoped that every nation in Europe would reduce its supply of weapons – and thus make nations less likely to go to war.





 World Colonial Holdings, ca. 1914. The European powers, great and small, competed with each other for world empires and world influence by 1900.

POINT #5: ENDING COLONIALISM

Colonialism and competition for colonies across the globe has often been cited as a cause of World War I. After the war, many people hoped that by ending colonial claims around the world they could prevent some of the conflicts between major European powers.



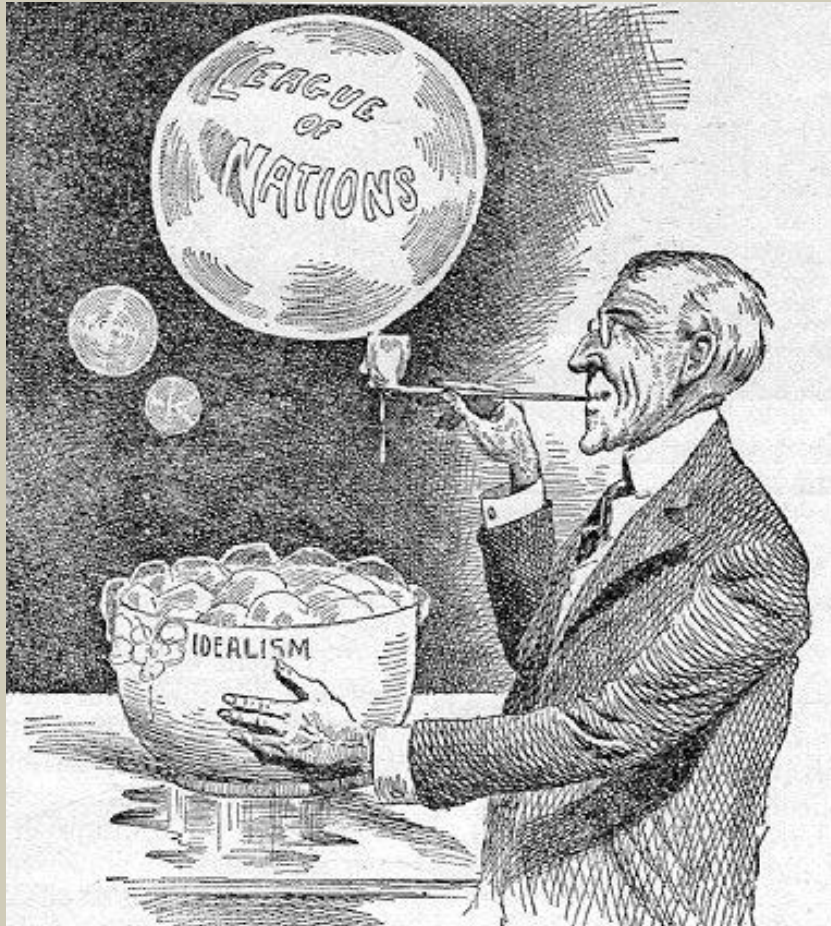
SELF-DETERMINATION



Self-Determination is the right of a group of people to decide their own form of government. Ethnic and national groups often sought self-determination – desiring to govern themselves, rather than submit to the rule of an empire or stronger nation. Different ethnic and national groups once ruled by Austria-Hungary gained self-government following the Great War. Racist or bigoted decision, however, were made by the most powerful nations present at the Treaty of Versailles to determine which nations would benefit. Ho Chi Minh's efforts, for example to advocate for Vietnamese Independence went unanswered.



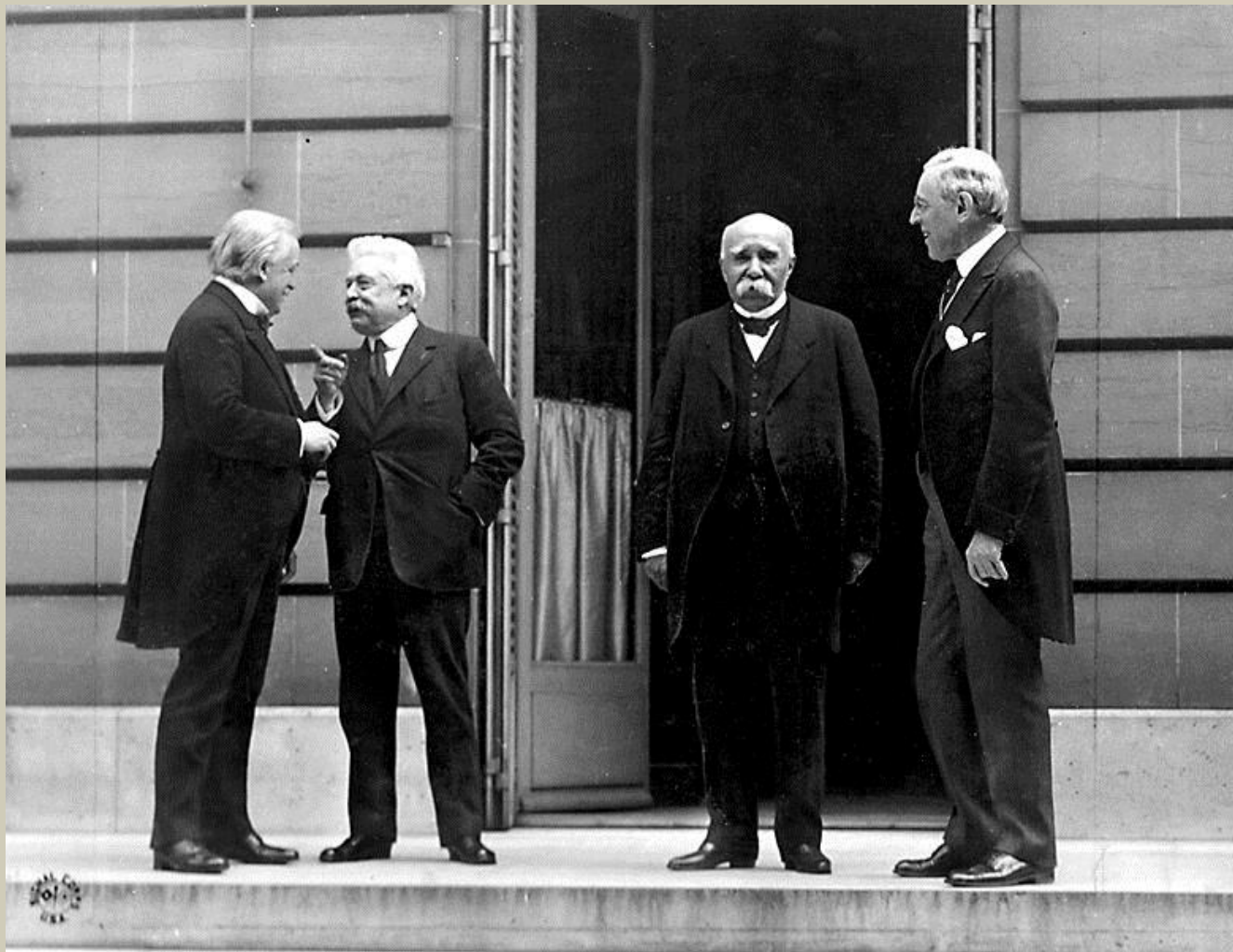
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS



The League of Nations was intended to become an international peacekeeping organization, or a world government with the power to resolve disputes between nations. Unfortunately, Woodrow Wilson's idealistic vision of the future was undermined by more realistic politicians – the leaders of European nations like Georges Clemenceau, David Lloyd George, and Vittorio Orlando, and American Senators like Henry Cabot Lodge.



THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1918 - 1919

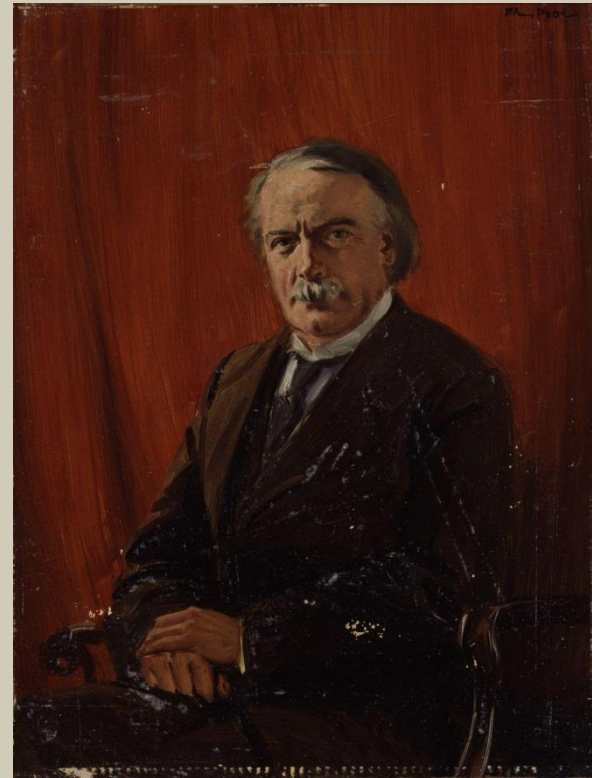


THE BIG FOUR

Woodrow Wilson, President
of the United States



David Lloyd George, Prime
Minister of England



THE BIG FOUR

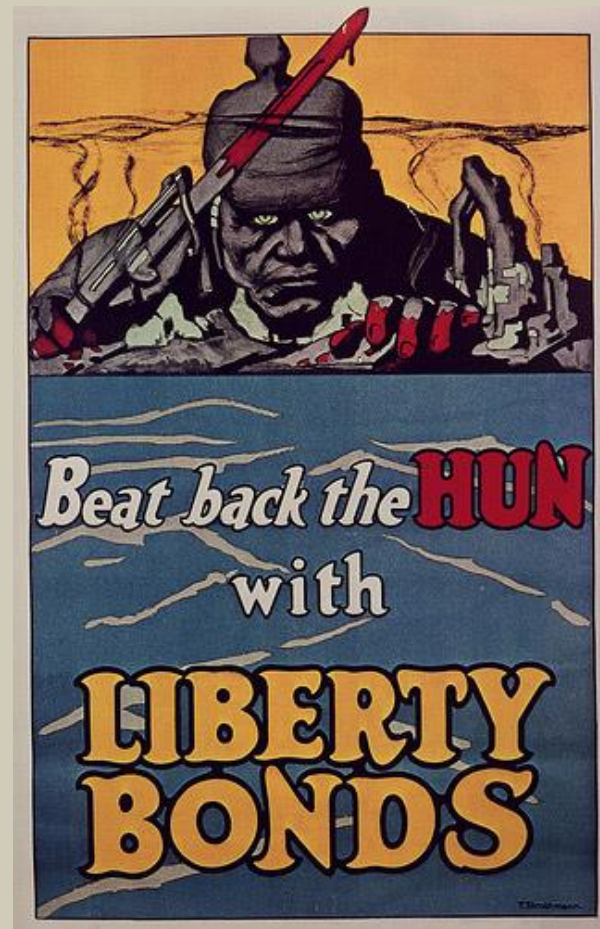
Georges Clemenceau of
France



Vittorio Orlando, Prime
Minister of Italy



GERMANY WAS BLAMED FOR STARTING THE WAR.
THEY WERE NOT REPRESENTED AT THE PARIS
PEACE CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, TO PROTEST.



REPARATIONS



Germany was forced to pay over \$32 Billion in reparations to the Allies – again, without consent from any German representatives at the Paris Peace Conference. After “The Great War,” Germany was required to pay so much money to the Allied Powers that its own economy was ruined, and the nation would remain desperately impoverished until the 1930s – when Hitler and the Nazi Party began to ignore the Treaty of Versailles and remilitarize. The Nazis, of course, blamed the current government for accepting an unfair treaty, and ultimately forced that government to capitulate to Hitler’s agenda.



GERMAN REPARATIONS TO THE ALLIES WRECKED THEIR ECONOMY, CAUSING HYPERINFLATION AND TURMOIL IN THE NATION.



THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS



The main purpose of the League of Nations was to prevent “the dogs of war” from being unleashed. Wilson envisioned the League as an international peacekeeping organization – a forum where the leaders of nations could resolve international disputes before they resulted in war. But in order for the League to work, all of the most powerful nations on Earth must participate in the organization’s mission.



NEW NATIONS IN EUROPE





NEW EUROPEAN NATIONS, 1918

FINLAND

ESTONIA

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

POLAND

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY

YUGOSLAVIA

TURKEY (FORMER OTTOMAN EMPIRE)

THE SOVIET UNION (FORMERLY RUSSIA)



NATIONS DESTROYED BY WW I

Austria-Hungary



The Ottoman Empire



SENATOR HENRY CABOT LODGE



Fearing that the United States would lose its sovereignty if it entered into a “World Government” like the League of Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge argued that the United States should not ratify the Treaty of Versailles or join the League of Nations.



HENRY CABOT LODGE



Americans who favored the Treaty of Versailles and participation in the League of Nations ridiculed Henry Cabot Lodge for his views on the League. What he saw a fearful international government which might usurp power from the United States and take away our sovereignty, many saw simply as a peacekeeping organization.



HENRY CABOT LODGE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS



Other Americans, however, saw Lodge's point, conceding that the United States foreign policy choices and ability to make its own decisions regarding military preparedness might be restricted by foreign powers like England, Japan, Germany, or Russia.



WOODROW WILSON'S STROKE: PUEBLO, CO, 1919



While on a speaking tour throughout America in support of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson collapsed from a devastating stroke. He would never fully recover, and many historians believe the Presidency was virtually controlled by his wife, Edith Wilson. For the last 17 months of his Presidency, Wilson was too enfeebled to rise from bed, and could barely scrawl his own name. His beloved Treaty of Versailles was never ratified by the United States Senate, and the US never joined the League of Nations.



THE UNITED STATES NEVER JOINED THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.



THE GAP IN THE BRIDGE.





THE WEAK LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Since the United States never joined the League, it was too weak to be effective as an international peacekeeping organization. The political cartoon to the left shows how many people thought of the League of Nations – it was too weak to carry out its own dictates, and too punchless to prevent international disputes from becoming wars.

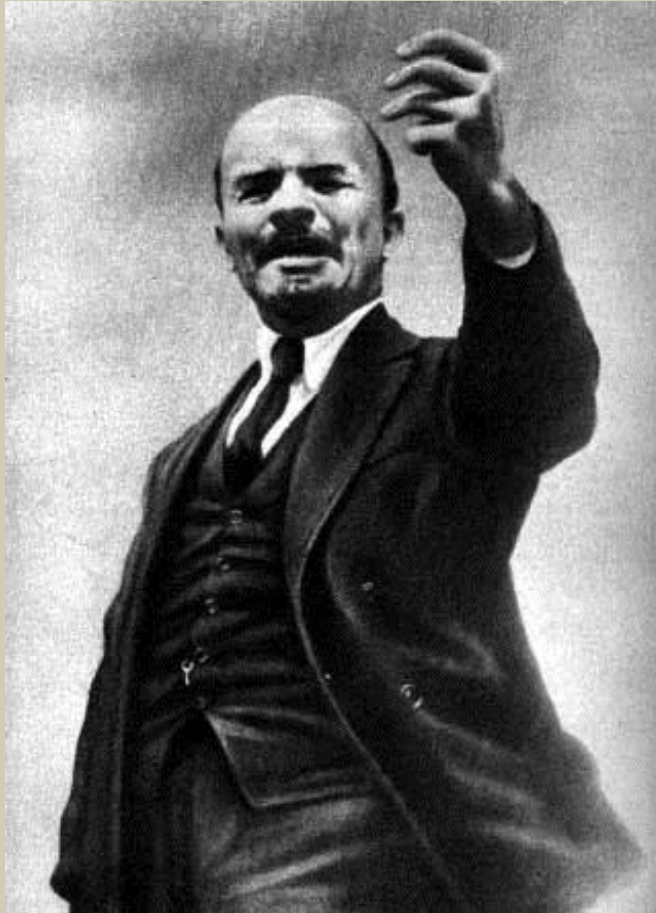


THE SPANISH FLU OF 1918-1919

Astonishingly, more Americans died during the winter of 1918-1919 of Influenza than had died during World War I. Worldwide, it is estimated that the flu epidemic killed close to 40 Million – twice as many as those who died during the ghastly conflict between 1914 – 1918. Helpless to stop the spread of the Flu, Americans shut down schools, major public events were cancelled, and undertakers could not keep up with the demand for coffins and gravestones as families buried loved ones.



THE RED SCARE OF THE 1920S





A. MITCHELL PALMER AND THE PALMER RAIDS

During the Palmer Raids of the early 1920s, the Attorney General of the United States invaded the homes and offices of anyone he viewed as a "Radical" – Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, and anyone else who, in his opinion, threatened American democracy. Many thousands of immigrants and labor union leaders were arrested or deported.

